

FOREWORD

Professor Vladimir Prelog will be 90 years of age on July 23, 1996! One way of honouring a scientist of his status on such an occasion is to dedicate him a special issue of a scientific journal to which he has been scientifically and/or emotionally attached. *Croatica Chemica Acta*, CCA, is such a journal. Vladimir Prelog is, along with another Nobel Laureate, Jean-Marie Lehn, a Honorary Editor of CCA and during his repeated, but brief, stays in Zagreb he has always found time to visit the Editorial Board.

Croat by birth, born in Sarajevo, Prelog started his academic career in 1935 as a docent and later professor of organic chemistry at the Technical Faculty of the University of Zagreb. In late 1941, at the invitation of Leopold Ružička he moved to Zürich joining the faculty of the *Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule*, ETH, where he has been ever since. However brief was his stay in Zagreb, it had a tremendous impact on the development of organic chemistry in Croatia and this can be felt even today. Among the papers Prelog published with his collaborators and students while in Zagreb, several appeared in the predecessors of *Croatica Chemica Acta*.

We, the three undersigned editors of this issue of CCA, appointed by the Editorial Board of CCA, perceiving Professor Prelog's modesty, were afraid that he might not agree with publishing a special issue of our journal in his honour. We, therefore consulted several prominent scientists, friends and former collaborators of Professor Prelog, who suggested that we solve the problem by publishing a »*Surprise Festschrift*« of CCA honouring Prelog's 90th birthday. The result of this endeavour is in your hands.

The contributors we have selected were only those who collaborated with Professor Prelog during his illustrious career, although not necessarily published their work with him. They have sent us their contributions in the form of original scientific papers, congratulatory notes, anecdotes, even a poem about him, descriptions of particular events or experiences, which illustrate the work and personality of this great chemist and educator.

For reasons just mentioned, we have divided this special issue of CCA into two parts, *viz.* the first part containing greetings and the second part reminiscences and original scientific papers.

We hope that the chemical community-at-large will find this »*Surprise Festschrift*« honouring Professor Vladimir Prelog an important contribution to contemporary chemical science and also an entertaining piece of reading about one of truly great chemist and humanitarians of the 20th century. Joining all contributors to this issue of CCA as well as all his other admirers, we wish Professor Vladimir Prelog many more happy years. Happy birthday Professor Prelog! Happy birthday dear Vlado!

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